

Oppose HB5653

I have been involved with civilian firearms ownership since 1980. I served in the U.S. Army from 1981 to 1987 earning my "EXPERT" marksmanship badge with the M16. I have held my CT state pistol permit since 1983 right after turning 21. I have competed in many firearms events in both rifle and pistol. I load my own pistol and rifle ammunition using standardized recipes and have developed and tested my own. I perform my own basic gunsmithing, fabrication, modification, and repairs. I have introduced and instructed many "firearms curious" to their first firearms experience as well as an introduction to reloading while stressing safety at all times. I belong to the N.R.A., The CT Citizen's Defense League, The Eastern CT Sportsman's Club, The Garand Collector's Association, and am an authorized purchaser through the Civilian Marksmanship Program. I consider myself to have more firearm experience than the average firearm owner, and certainly more experience than the majority of members of the CT General Assembly, Administration, and state bureaucrats.

The U.S. Constitution; Second Amendment

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Constitution of the State of Connecticut; Article First, Section 15

Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state.

Neither of these statements confer any right to arms, but instead are meant to PREVENT government from denying a right to be armed. These rights come from God the Almighty to Americans by birth, not granted by any government entity. That would be a "privilege" not a right.

The pro-civilian firearm disarmament element in the state government are once again targeting the peaceable gun owners of the state, this time by desiring to levy a punitive tax on ammunition purchases. Ammunition and magazines are as much a part of "arms" as stated in both constitutions as a firearm itself.

As anyone with a shred of common sense should know, the criminal element does not and cannot waltz into WalMart, Hoffman's, Cabelas, or the other smaller sporting goods retailers in the state and purchase the ammunition for their criminal activities (**see note 1**). They are forced to steal it or buy it on the black market. None of those type of transactions provide any type of revenue stream from taxes; sales tax or otherwise. Do you know what happens if I were to walk into such a retailer in CT to buy ammunition and didn't have my pistol permit on me? I would be denied the purchase, no ifs or buts. Funny how the criminal element doesn't seem to have such a problem and no law can fix that. Therefore such proposed legislation as HB 5653, which is nothing more than placing a "sin tax" on constitutionally protected activities, is yet one more infringement against The Second Amendment and State Constitution. It is so unfortunate that our state seems to have this bad habit of passing such infringements knowing they will end up in court, and then state officials crying like little children when they are sued (like right now with the multiple pending lawsuits). I will personally be more than happy to again voluntarily contribute to any court costs and attorney fees to fight such poor legislation should it pass. Penalizing the peaceable citizen for the actions of criminals and forcing them to pay for the prevention of those criminal activities is wrong... legally and morally. As far as "community gun violence" is concerned, my community of Ashford (in fact most of rural Windham County) has high per capita firearms ownership and use. Yet the little violent crime that does happen out here is usually caused by those that don't live here. The nightly news stories I see of "gun violence" comes out of Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, etc. I suggest you unleash law enforcement and target those "communities".... and hard.

How about this novel idea? Crack down on criminals using or caught with firearms and ammunition like the original laws state. I'd be happy with search and seizure of person and property upon arrest, no bail, no plea downs, and no reduced sentences.

FOR THE RECORD: I OPPOSE HB 5653

Note 1

Sec. 29-38m. Sale of ammunition or ammunition magazine. (a) For the purposes of this section and sections 29-38n to 29-38p, inclusive, "ammunition" means a loaded cartridge, consisting of a primed case, propellant or projectile, designed for use in any firearm, "firearm" has the meaning provided in section 53a-3, and "magazine" means any firearm magazine, belt, drum, feed strip or similar device that accepts ammunition.

(b) No person, firm or corporation shall sell ammunition or an ammunition magazine to any person under eighteen years of age.

(c) On and after October 1, 2013, no person, firm or corporation shall sell ammunition or an ammunition magazine to any person unless such person holds a valid permit to carry a pistol or revolver issued pursuant to subsection (b) of section 29-28, a valid permit to sell at retail a pistol or revolver issued pursuant to subsection (a) of section 29-28, a valid eligibility certificate for a pistol or revolver issued pursuant to section 29-36f or a valid long gun eligibility certificate issued pursuant to section 29-37p and presents to the transferor such permit or certificate, or unless such person holds a valid ammunition certificate issued pursuant to section 29-38n and presents to the transferor such certificate and such person's motor vehicle operator's license, passport or other valid form of identification issued by the federal government or a state or municipal government that contains such person's date of birth and photograph.

(d) The provisions of subsection (c) of this section shall not apply to the sale of ammunition to (1) the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, police departments, the Department of Correction, the Division of Criminal Justice, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection or the military or naval forces of this state or of the United States; (2) a sworn and duly certified member of an organized police department, the Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection or the Department of Correction, a chief inspector or inspector in the Division of Criminal Justice, a salaried inspector of motor vehicles designated by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, a conservation officer or special conservation officer appointed by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection pursuant to section 26-5, or a constable who is certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council and appointed by the chief executive authority of a town, city or borough to perform criminal law enforcement duties, for use by such sworn member, inspector, officer or constable in the discharge of such sworn member's, inspector's, officer's or constable's official duties or when off duty; (3) a member of the military or naval forces of this state or of the United States; (4) a nuclear facility licensed by the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the purpose of providing security services at such facility, or any contractor or subcontractor of such facility for the purpose of providing security services at such facility; or (5) a federally licensed firearm manufacturer, importer, dealer or collector.

(e) Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be guilty of a class D felony.